
From: HJR153
Sent: Monday, October 11, 2004 3:49 PM
To: HJR153
Subject: HJR153 - Paul Tubach, Jr.

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Utility Type: all

Company Name: Dominion Power and all communication providers

Comments: I strongly support the underground placement of utilities along roadway corridors. Many convincing justifications can be made on aesthetic reasons alone. Virginia is one of the most beautiful states in the country, but power poles have become a ubiquitous blight on our scenic landscape. If utilities were placed underground, there would be more opportunities for landscaped rights-of-way, recreational trails, and the restoration of picturesque tree canopies. But by far, the single best justification is economic. If the lost to Virginia's economy were calculated based upon natural disasters alone, many could support this proposal. Ice storms, hurricanes, and rogue tornadoes have left millions of residences and businesses without power just since 1999. Add to this the amount of work that could have been performed on-line from home rather than depend on a physical location is substantial. Furthermore, working from home through reliable communication lines is another way to protect the environment, reduce pollution, and minimize traffic congestion that requires the ever widening of roads. What about the loss of life from motorists striking fixed objects like utility poles? How much grief is there that could be avoided, or the cost of Police, Fire, and EMS/Rescue workers responding to an incident that is paid by each locality when a motorist hits a pole? Most recently, I have observed the denuding of good vegetation through aerial sprays in an effort to control growth and reduce routine mowing maintenance. Our community looked as if the military sprayed napalm. This environmental tragedy on our native plants, wildflowers, wetlands, streams, and wildlife habitat does not need to continue if utilities are placed underground. My personal interest is to promote roadside trails. The prospect of locating trails and utilities within the same narrow right-of-way will reduce the overall cleared ROW width and save additional tree buffer.

In Virginia, this makes good sense. In my community, it has been long overdue. As we look to the future funding and development of the Virginia Capital Trail, our opportunity to either enhance or hinder the visual beauty of this premier regional trail will be seen for many generations to come.